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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/694,653	10/23/2000	John Overman	5384/55100	3830

7590 02/27/2004

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EXAMINER

KRIZEK, JANICE LEE

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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3652

DATE MAILED: 02/27/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/694,653

Applicant(s)

OVERMAN ET AL.

Examiner

Janice L. Krizek

Art Unit

3652

MW

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 17 November 2003.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-50 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-50 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☒ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: _____.

1. Applicant's election with traverse of Group II, claims 15-50, in Paper No. 11 is acknowledged. The traversal is on the ground(s) that two-way distinctness between Groups I and II has not been demonstrated. This is found persuasive, Groups I and II are joined and an action on claims 1-50 is set forth below.

2. The disclosure is objected to because of the following informalities:

In the first line of claims 31, 32 and 34, -- assembly-- should be inserted after "guide".

In the first line of claims 43 and 45, "apparatus" should be -- method --.

Appropriate correction is required.

3. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

4. Claims 11, 21 and 22 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

Claim 11 does not set forth a proper step which constitutes the claimed method.

There is no clear antecedent basis for "said small stack" recited in the second line of claims 21 and 22 and in line 4 of claim 22. Note that base claim 15 recites "multiple small stacks" and "said small stacks"; it is not clear which stack of the plurality of small stacks is being claimed.

5. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

(e) the invention was described in a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention thereof by the applicant for patent, or on an international application by another who has fulfilled the requirements of paragraphs (1), (2), and (4) of section 371(c) of this title before the invention thereof by the applicant for patent.

The changes made to 35 U.S.C. 102(e) by the American Inventors Protection Act of 1999 (AIPA) and the Intellectual Property and High Technology Technical Amendments Act of 2002 do not apply when the reference is a U.S. patent resulting directly or indirectly from an international application filed before November 29, 2000. Therefore, the prior art date of the reference is determined under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) prior to the amendment by the AIPA (pre-AIPA 35 U.S.C. 102(e)).

6. Claims 1-7 and 15-39 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Belgian Patent No. 628233.

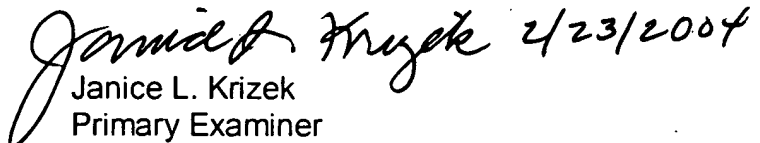
The Belgian patent discloses an autotraying system including means 172, 180 for engaging a tray 170.

7. Claims 8-14 and 40-50 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being clearly anticipated by Hendrickson et al.

8. The cited prior art shows article handling methods and apparatus.
9. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Examiner Janice Krizek whose telephone number is (703) 308-2026. The examiner can normally be reached on Mondays through Fridays from 11:30 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Eileen Lillis, can be reached at (703) 308-3248. The central official fax number is (703) 872-9306.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the Technology Center receptionist whose telephone number is (703) 308-1113.


Janice L. Krizek
Primary Examiner
Technology Center 3600